

FREMONT BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

Fremont Town Hall
 295 Main Street
 Fremont, NH 03044
January 8, 2014
 7:00 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Charles Kimball called the January 8, 2014 Budget Committee meeting to order at 7:05 pm on the main floor of Fremont Town Hall.

Present were: Budget Committee Chair Charles Kimball and members Gene Cordes, Greg Fraize, Pat Martel, Mike Nygren, and Tyra Vargas, Heidi Carlson, and Recording Secretary Susan Perry. Members of the public included Carla Smith, Ida Keane, Andy Kohlhofer, and Sharon Girardi, School Superintendent Betsey Cox-Buteau, and School Financial Administrator Susan Penny.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: NOVEMBER 13, DECEMBER 4, DECEMBER 18

Greg Fraize made a motion to approve the minutes of November 13, 2013 as written. Gene Cordes seconded the motion. Motion passed 6:0.

Greg Fraize made a motion to approve the minutes of December 4, 2013 as written. Mike Nygren seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0:1 (G. Cordes abstention).

Mike Nygren made a motion to amend the minutes of December 18, 2013 to reflect that there was a decision to ask Greg Fraize to go back to the School Board to find \$24,219 elsewhere in the budget. Pat Martel seconded the motion. Motion passed 6:0.

Greg Fraize made a motion to approve as amended the minutes of December 18, 2013. Pat Martel seconded the motion. Motion passed 6:0.

III. SCHOOL

Mr. Fraize reported that the School Board met last night and, as requested by the Budget Committee, found a location to take the \$24,219: from line 53 of the budget where \$40,000 was set as a placeholder. This made the amount in line 53 \$15,781. This provided that the part-time nurse position would stay intact.

FINALIZE WARRANT ARTICLES

Warrant Article 1 did not need to be voted on.

Warrant Article 2

There was a review of the teachers' contract that was voted and approved by the School Board. Salary increases included salaries and benefits at the current staff level. The contract had no Evergreen clause, it allowed the District to shop around for better health insurance, it

limited professional workshop days to 3 and it limited absences per day to 3. Switching health insurance companies would save \$27,000.

Salary increases:

<u>FISCAL YEAR</u>	<u>ESTIMATED INCREASE</u>
2014-2015	\$52,263.26 (3.25% raise and STEP freeze)
2015-2016	\$67,376.82 (everyone gets STEP)
2016-2017	\$68,282.69

There was discussion if W.A. 2 failed. If this were the case, there would be no raises and teachers could grieve and there would be a 9.2% increase in insurance premiums (high due to claims and risk factors). It was suggested that narratives be added for the salary increases.

Gene Cordes made a motion to recommend School District Warrant Article 2 as presented. Greg Fraize seconded the motion. Motion passed 6:0.

Warrant Article 3

Gene Cordes made a motion to recommend School District Warrant Article 3 as presented. Greg Fraize seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:1 (nay P. Martel)

Warrant Article 4

<u>FISCAL YEAR</u>	<u>ESTIMATED INCREASE</u>
2014-2015	\$23,478.89
2015-2016	\$14,679.60

The Support Staff's last contract was a negative number and they had no cost of living or Step increases. In anticipation of Obamacare, healthcare had to be offered to all Support Staff. However, only 7 people (about half the Support Staff) signed up for insurance so there would be a savings. The Support Staff and teacher contracts were staggered so they would not run out and be negotiated the same year.

Greg Fraize made a motion to recommend School District Warrant Article 4 as presented. Greg Fraize seconded the motion. Motion passed 6:0.

Warrant Article 5

Gene Cordes made a motion to recommend School District Warrant Article 5 as presented. Greg Fraize seconded the motion. Motion passed 4:2 (nay P. Martel, M. Nygren)

Warrant Article 7

The Superintendent has been tracking grants that were available to the District but could not be used due to not being able to use unanticipated funds. So far, the possible grants amounted to \$459,000. For example, the District could have received funds for a generator that came in July 2013 but, due to the rule, it lost that opportunity.

The School District was now using a capital replacement cycle. The State required Districts to have a plan and prove that the District had been taking care of the building in order to get

funding. The expendable trust fund would provide money for emergency repairs and projects such as remotely controlling heat at the school.

Gene Cordes made a motion to recommend School District Warrant Article 7 as presented. Greg Fraize seconded the motion. Motion passed 6:0.

Warrant Article 8

Greg Fraize made a motion to recommend School District Warrant Article 8 as presented. Gene Cordes seconded the motion. Motion passed 4:2 (nay M. Nygren, C. Kimball.)

There was discussion about budget questions and cuts. This included staffing levels, especially in kindergarten, which had 3 teachers for 30 students. Mr. Cordes felt this seemed intense. Dr. Cox-Buteau stated that there would be 23 kindergarteners next year but usually 8-10 more were added by the start of the school year. She agreed that the class sizes this year were low but she said that it was difficult to predict numbers for the next year. She added there would be 4 identified (with special needs/IEPs) students and this required more of teachers.

Dr. Cox-Buteau clarified that if a teaching position equivalent were cut, it might not necessarily mean the last person hired would be cut. There were steps in the CBA to identify a teacher that included evaluation, longevity and credentials. They would see who could teach in certain areas and make a decision.

A newspaper article was presented by the Budget Committee about the Derry School District making teacher cuts. The article supported the notion that students in larger class sizes (e.g. an average of 25 students in grades 4-5) were able to perform well. Mr. Kohlhofer noted that Ellis did not have the physical size to divide classes, etc.

Mr. Cordes asked the Committee to consider reducing the cost in regular education and let the administration decide what was necessary.

It was clarified that the science teacher taught grades 7 and 8 every day and did not have a homeroom (which was just for attendance) so that preparations could be done during that time.

Ms. Keane asked the Committee what their goal of teacher: student ratio. Mr. Cordes replied that they were not educators but that 1:10 seemed low and that 1:17 seemed a desirable average. Mr. Nygren said that 1:25 was a State average ratio. Ms. Martel said that the Town could not afford one amount but could support another amount. Ms. Girardi noted that having lower ratios would help drive achievement and bridge the gap between Special education and regular education.

Pat Martel made a motion to recommend reducing the first line 1100 by \$47,000 (equaling \$1,507,024). The justification was the thought that the District could lose a teacher within the school. Gene Cordes seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:1 (nay G. Fraize).

Under Tuition Public H.S., the \$18,000 special agreement correlated with an outside contract based on litigation (placement of a child by court). The \$5,000 adult ed. Amount referred to an alternative learning plan.

There was discussion about tuition cost. The cost of a high school Special Education student next year was about \$25,000. Para-professionals hired to service students were employees of Sanborn and were the “variable” in the tuition cost. Due to the contract, regular education was charged one rate and Special Education was charged another half. The enrollment in Sanborn would decrease next year and accounted for the higher cost to Fremont (based on the size of the class leaving and the size of the class entering). Another factor was the new teacher contract (big retirement package) in Sanborn. Mr. Nygren noted that \$550,000 was the increased amount voted on for the CBA (not the \$1.2 million that was told to Fremont); Dr. Cox-Buteau would inquire about this.

There was a discussion about accreditation, which was required if Fremont ever wanted to try to be a collaborative with Sanborn. It would benefit the Town and the education of students. \$11,000 was allotted to pay staff for training. Ms. Martel did not feel it was necessary to start this now, as Ellis had modulars that could not be part of accreditation and because the process took 3-4 years. It was noted that this would be the first step in the accreditation process no matter when it began.

Pat Martel made a motion to not recommend the \$11,000 in line item 2210 for this year. Mike Nygren seconded the motion. Motion passed 4:2 (nay G. Fraize and G. Cordes).

The breakdown of cuts made by the Budget Committee was as follows:

	Round		Exact			
Pat	\$	47,000.00	\$	47,000.00	Regular Teach Salary	
					Course Reimbursements	
					Supply's	
Pat	\$	65,485.00	\$	65,483.88	From page 3 of the budget, Line 5640..they cut	
Pat	\$	11,000.00	\$	11,000.00	\$935.30	
Mike	\$	27,500.00	\$	27,500.00	(Line 179 page 28 NEASC)	
Charles	\$	24,219.00	\$	24,219.00	Substitute Line	
Gene	\$	20,000.00	\$	20,000.00	Money to Replace Computer Equipment	
tara	\$	-	\$	-	(248 page 35 Raises non Union)	
Total	\$	195,204.00	\$	195,202.88		
board budg	\$	12,052,188.71			New Budget	\$ 11,856,986.83
Default	\$	11,939,107.45			Default	\$ 82,121.62
						Voted number \$ 11,856,986.00
					Nurse	\$ 24,219.00 gone
					Supply	\$ 12,000.00 saved
						\$ 36,219.00
	supply cut	\$27,985				\$ 602,609.44 Charles 5%
		12,000	is work books			

It was noted that non-CBA staff (psychologist, out-of-District coordinators, Principal, etc.) have had no raises for a few years.

Gene Cordes made a motion to recommend \$11,876,986 for the School District budget for 2014-15. Greg Fraize seconded the motion.

Pat Martel made a motion to amend Gene Cordes' motion to read \$11,856,986 (reasoning: if the CBA did not pass, there would be savings – teachers would get a 3.25% raise instead of 3.5%) Mike Nygren seconded the motion. Motion passed 4:2 (nay G. Fraize and G. Cordes).

Gene Cordes made a motion to recommend \$11,856,986 for the School District budget for 2014-2015. Greg Fraize seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:1 (nay: P. Martel).

Warrant Article 6

Gene Cordes made a motion to recommend School District Warrant Article 6 with \$11,856,986 added to the document. Pat Martel seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:1 (nay G. Fraize).

School Deliberative Session dates were February 4 (snow date February 7) at 7 pm.

IV. TOWN

Deliberative Session dates were February 5 (snow date February 6) at 7 pm.

TOWN Warrant Article 4

It was explained that Warrant Article would help the ACO with calls regarding horses, farm animals and foul that cause issues on people's property, since there were no State regulations regarding foul.

Greg Fraize made a motion to recommend Town Warrant Article 4 as presented. Gene Cordes seconded the motion. Motion passed 4:2.

The Warrant Article regarding Capital reserve for the highway building was removed by the Selectmen.

Signups for open offices would be held between January 22 and January 31, 2014. There were 5 open positions on the Budget Committee.

The Budget Committee members could look through the MS 7. Information on tax impact and fire truck lease payments was distributed tonight.

The Public Hearing will be on Wednesday January 15, 2014 (snow date January 16). Ms. Carlson would talk to the Budget Committee chair and one other person if there needs to be a postponement due to weather conditions/safety.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Gene Cordes made a motion to adjourn at 9:17 PM. Mike Nygren seconded the motion. Motion passed 6:0.

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan Perry, Budget Committee Secretary